

October 16, 1962

Dear Ned:

Many thanks for your note of the 10th. I saw the Lippman article and I appreciate your comments on it. We are certainly trying to solve this one in the national interest and I hope that I'll collect on your offer.

With very best wishes,

Sincerely,

Ralph A. Dungan
Special Assistant
to the President

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EDWARD J. GERRITY, JR.
VICE PRESIDENT-PUBLIC RELATIONS

October 10, 1962.

Mr. Ralph A. Dungan
Special Assistant
to the President
The White House
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Ralph:

Apropos of my recent letter, I could not resist calling your attention to the column (attached) by Walter Lippman in which he makes the very same point that Harold Geneen did weeks ago: namely, that Cuba must be a model of Communist success.

Certainly this must be a primary long-range goal of Khrushchev and it may well be the most important one. Viewed against the urgency of the situation, this perhaps provides an even more compelling reason why something must be done to offset, or neutralize, this threat.

Incidentally, the same day that Mr. Lippman was citing Mr. Ball's testimony, Bob Allen was writing that Ball's figures aren't very reliable if Congressman Kitchin's findings on the scene are accurate.

If you figure out to solve this one in the national interest, I'll personally lobby for a pay increase and a medal for you.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,



Today and Tomorrow On War Over Cuba

By Walter Lippmann

ON THE question of going to war over Cuba (by blockade or invasion) we now have available a summary of the intelligence findings on which the Administration is acting. These facts explain the President's decision to confine himself at this time to measures which are short of war. The facts were put on the record last Wednesday, Oct. 3, before the House Select Committee on Export Control by Mr. George Ball, the Undersecretary of State.

This intelligence estimate is based on an elaborate system of surveillance by sea, by air and by land, and there is every reason to think that its accuracy is very high. For Cuba is an island easily within reach of the Navy and the Air Force, and with modern apparatus of electronic and photographic intelligence, little of military interest can happen without our knowing it. We do not have to guess about what is being landed at the Cuban ports, or about what is being constructed on Cuban territory. We know. And any one who chooses to question the basis of our present policy must begin by proving that the intelligence estimates are wrong.

So I shall quote in full Mr. Ball's testimony on the crucial question of the Cuban military buildup. "Since July, when the volume of Soviet military shipments to Cuba suddenly vaulted upward, 85 shiploads arrived in Cuban ports. Many of them carried military items, supplies and personnel. These shipments have consisted, in part, of types of weapons previously delivered to the Cuban armed forces, including more tanks, self-propelled guns, and other ground force equipment. The major change in recent shipments, however, has been devoted to SA-2, surface-to-air missiles (SAMs)—together with all the related gear and equipment necessary for their installation and operation. To date, 15 SAMs have been established in the island. The total may eventually reach 25. These are anti-aircraft missiles having a slant range of 20 to 25 miles.

In addition, three and possibly four missile sites of a different type have been identified. These sites are similar to known Soviet coastal defense missile sites that are believed to accommodate anti-shiping missiles with a range of 20-35 miles. Quite likely several more such sites will be installed.

It is now estimated to have 60 MIG jet aircraft. In addition, at least one advanced jet-interceptor has recently been received, and several more are in the process of being received. This type of advanced interceptor is usually equipped with surface-to-air missiles. We estimate that the total of these advanced interceptors in Cuba may eventually reach 25 to 30.

"In addition, 16 'Komar'-class guided missile patrol boats, which carry two short-range missiles (11-17 miles), were included in recent shipments.

"About 4,500 Soviet military specialists have arrived, including construction men and technicians."

The military buildup, in short, consists of weapons for the army, anti-aircraft missiles, coastal defense weapons, some short-range patrol boats, a few fighter-interceptors and some 4,500 Soviet specialists, technicians, and construction men. What is it all for? To attack the United States? Obviously not. The United States, using only conventional weapons, could dispose of Cuba in a few hours. Is the buildup to invade a Latin American neighbor? Conceivably, but only if Castro were prepared for the enormous punishment that would follow. It is obvious, I submit, that Castro is being armed against a re-run of the raid on the Bay of Pigs in April, 1961. Tanks, coastal defenses, patrol boats and anti-aircraft equipment would be just exactly what he would need to repel another landing by Cuban exiles.

The present Cuban military buildup is not only not capable of offensive action, but also it is not capable of defensive action against the United States.

What then is Mr. Khrushchev up to in Cuba? Secondly, perhaps, he is baiting a trap for us which, if we fall into it, would throw the whole Western alliance into confusion and disorder just at the time when a Berlin crisis is developing.

But primarily, Mr. Khrushchev is in Cuba because he has talked so loudly about helping revolutions. Castro has thrown himself into Khrushchev's arms, and is blackmailing him. The Castro regime has made itself the prime and public test of whether international communism is a real force or a lot of words. Unless Castro can be made to succeed in Cuba, the revolutionary propaganda among the backward countries in the rest of the world will be greatly weakened.

So Mr. Khrushchev, despite what was undoubtedly much reluctance, is entangled in the fortunes of Fidel Castro. He must pour into Cuba oil and machinery, raw materials and food and technicians and know-how and money in order to demonstrate that communism can go better and faster in Cuba than the United States and Alliance for Progress are trying slowly, but by peaceful means, to do elsewhere in Latin America.

This is the core of the Soviet-Cuban alliance. Mr. Ball described the Soviet intervention in Cuba as an effort "to establish a beachhead for subversion in this hemisphere." This would mean that Cuban facilities and Cuban connections with other countries in Latin America would be used to infiltrate

agents and propaganda, and to collect money. All of this will back off if in Cuba there is a show of successful communism. It will not work if the agents come from a country which is not a party and charter.

It follows that as long as there is no direct military aggression, and as long as we are continuing to take measures short of war, one of the best responses is to force the Soviet Union and the Soviet Bloc to carry the whole burden of Cuban reconstruction. That is the intent of the shipping measures now being formulated. They will not destroy the Castro regime now. But they will make it much more expensive and inconvenient for the Soviet Union to make Castro succeed.

Following the increasing application of the war party in this country, I have turned once more to a famous passage in Winston Churchill's writings in which he discusses the rights and wrongs of going to war.

"The safety of the State, the lives and freedom of their own fellow countrymen, to whom (the statesmen) owe their position, make it right and imperative in the last resort, or when a final and definite

conviction has been reached that the use of force should not be excluded. If the circumstances are such as to warrant it, force may be used. And if this be so, it should be used under the conditions which are most favorable. There is no merit in putting off a war for a year if, when it comes, it is a far worse war or one much harder to win. These are the tormenting dilemmas upon which mankind has throughout its history been so frequently impaled. Final judgment upon them can only be recorded by history in relation to the facts of the case as known to the parties at the time, and also as subsequently proved."

In the Cuban question the facts do not now compel a decision to go to war and there is no evidence whatsoever that war is inevitable and that it should therefore be engaged in at once.

"Those who are prone by temperament and character to seek sharp and clear-cut solutions of difficult and obscure problems, who are ready to fight whenever some challenge comes from a foreign power, have not always been right. On the other hand, those whose inclination is to bow their heads, who seek patiently and faithfully for peaceful compromise, are not always wrong. On the contrary, in the majority of instances they may be right, not only morally but from a practical standpoint. How many wars have been averted by patience and persistent good will. . . . How many wars have been precipitated by firebrands!"

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